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TAGS: PREL PGOV NATO GR MK AF GG UP

SUBJECT: GREECE/NATO: MFA NATO DIRECTOR ON MACEDONIA,  
AFGHANISTAN, KOSOVO, AND MAP/GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

REF: A. ATHENS 313

1B. STATE 19516

Classified By: A/Political Counselor Jeff Hovenier for 1.4 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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11. (C) In a March 5 meeting with A/Political Counselor, Ambassador Iraklis Asteriadis, MFA Director of the D2 Directorate for NATO and WEU Affairs, affirmed that FM Bakoyannis will tell NATO FMs at the March 6 informal that Greece cannot agree to a NATO invitation for Macedonia absent an agreement on the name and expects Alliance solidarity. Asteriadis commended NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's public comments during his March 3 visit to Athens, noting the difference between a "long-standing NATO Ally" and a "NATO Aspirant." On Afghanistan, Asteriadis said Greece has offered an OMLT; NATO responded by asking for personnel in a U.S. embedded training group in Kabul. de Hoop Scheffer was told Greece cannot spare helicopters. Asteriadis wanted details about the Dai Kundi PRT. On Kosovo, de Hoop Scheffer was told Greece will maintain its present troop levels, and FM Bakoyannis emphasized the need for NATO to protect religious and patrimonial sites. Greece supports MAP for Georgia "long-term, but not now," and is concerned that the Ukrainian population may not be behind government efforts to obtain MAP. End Summary.

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Macedonia at March 6 NATO FM Meeting  
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12. (C) Asteriadis -- who will accompany FM Bakoyannis to the March 6 NATO Ministerial -- said that FM Bakoyannis will be "clear and direct:" Greece will not agree to a NATO invitation for Skopje absent an agreed solution, and Greece expects Alliance solidarity. Asteriadis positively noted NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's public comments during his March 3 visit to Athens to the effect that "Greece is a long-standing Ally," while Macedonia "is only an Aspirant." Asteriadis said he hoped Allied Foreign Ministers would follow this line. A/PolCounselor reiterated U.S. desire for Greece and Macedonia to demonstrate flexibility and engage constructively in the process under UN Envoy Nimetz. Asteriadis said Greece fully intends to do so, but reiterated that Greece will not join any NATO consensus on Macedonia absent an agreed solution.

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Afghanistan  
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13. (C) Asteriadis said he had been informed of Ambassador Speckhard's March 3 discussion with FM Bakoyannis (ref A) on

further Greek support for ISAF. He said Greece had offered NATO one OMLT -- within the provisions of Greece's caveat that forces be deployed "within 60 kilometers around Kabul." NATO authorities had come back to suggest Greece provide personnel to a U.S.-led embedded training unit in Kabul, and Greece had offered up to 8 personnel. "For now, they are taking three, but our others remain on offer." A/Pol Counselor asked that Greece consider providing additional OMLTs, and reiterated the U.S. request that the caveat be lifted, and that Greece provide helicopters for ISAF.

Asteriadis said that the caveat is "essential to maintaining public support for deployments to Afghanistan." He added, "it is not a question of being in with a caveat or not; it is a question of being in with a caveat or out all together." On helicopters, he repeated FM Bakoyannis' line (ref A) -- Greece cannot spare any helicopters at this time, due to needs in the Aegean, but may be able to provide helicopters next year after Greece completes an additional helicopter purchase.

¶4. (C) A/Pol Counselor previewed that Ambassador Speckhard would soon meet with Defense Minister Meimarakis (Note: this meeting is now scheduled for March 7. End Note) to press on these issues and also to suggest that Greece lead a PRT in Dai Kundi. Asteriadis said that the request would receive "careful consideration," and he asked that we provide "as much detail as you can" with regard to what is required for Dai Kundi.

¶5. (C) Comment: Per ref B, we continue to press for further Greek contributions to ISAF. It was refreshing that Asteriadis did not dismiss a Greek-led PRT in Dai Kundi out of hand. However, this will ultimately be a political decision taken at the highest levels. We'll start the heavy

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lifting in Ambassador Speckhard's March 7 meeting with Defense Minister Meimarakis. End Comment.

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Kosovo  
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¶6. (C) Asteriadis said de Hoop Scheffer had been assured that Greece strongly supports the KFOR mission and will maintain its present levels. He added that de Hoop Scheffer and FM Bakoyannis had agreed that KFOR must pay particular attention to Serbian church and cultural patrimonial sites.

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Georgia and Ukraine MAP  
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¶7. (C) Asteriadis said de Hoop Scheffer had raised the issue of MAP for Georgia and Ukraine during his visit -- although in a "low key way." Asteriadis added that Greece "supports MAP for Georgia, but not now," given the lack of Allied support and concerns about how Georgian President Saakashvili handled events of November - December 2007. On Ukraine, Asteriadis said that we "now know what the government wants," but "we do not know whether this reflects the will of the population." He was skeptical that the Alliance would want to take decisions on either issue in the "near future," but agreed that the prospect of NATO membership is essential to fostering reform in both nations.  
SPECKHARD